

# Press Release



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## Maryland Launches Green Travel Program [www.visitmaryland.org/green](http://www.visitmaryland.org/green)

BALTIMORE (Nov. 5, 2009) – As an extension of Gov. Martin O’Malley’s *Smart, Green and Growing* agenda, the Office of Tourism – in partnership with the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and the Maryland Tourism Council – is launching ***Maryland Green Travel***. The new initiative will encourage environmentally-friendly practices throughout the state’s tourism industry and promote Maryland as a “green” destination to eco-minded travelers.

The initial stage of the program will create an online, self-certification application for the lodging sector that uses environmental guidelines adopted by the American Hotel and Lodging Association and the best practices of MDE’s *Green Registry*. A similar process will be implemented for restaurants, attractions and other tourism businesses during 2010.

“We believe Maryland Green Travel will prove to have great marketing value for individual properties and for the state’s tourism industry overall,” said Gov. O’Malley. “Most properties will see cost savings through waste reduction, recycling and innovative approaches to energy and water conservation.”

As a voluntary program, *Maryland Green Travel* will encourage certified properties to share their environmental practices in order to promote themselves as “green” properties and to encourage others to similarly reduce their impacts on Maryland’s environment.

The Office of Tourism has designed a “green” micro site on its *visitmaryland.org* web site that promotes the state’s eco-friendly businesses and attractions to environmentally-conscious consumers. The site, [www.visitmaryland.org/green](http://www.visitmaryland.org/green), will also include an online application and provide tips and resources on best practices for environmental management and leadership, waste reduction, energy and water conservation, and transportation.

“Increasingly, travelers are making travel plans based on sustainable practices that reduce our carbon footprint. *Maryland Green Travel* will promote those businesses that undergo self-certification, said Margot Amelia, executive director of the Maryland Office of Tourism. “We would like this program to be a collaborative effort. Industry participation is needed for the program to be beneficial for both the tourism industry and the environment.”

Properties that are part of the program will be identified as *Maryland Green Travel* partners on the official state tourism site, [visitmaryland.org](http://visitmaryland.org), which receives nearly 2 million unique visitors a year. Additionally, participating businesses will be certified for and promoted on the Maryland Department of the Environment’s [Maryland Green Registry](#).

“I was greatly impressed with how quickly the Office of Tourism has ramped up the Maryland Green Travel program,” said Paul Bales, owner of The Crossings at Casey Jones and Culinary Concepts, LLC. “The Office of Tourism truly has its finger on the pulse of Green initiatives. It was not surprising to hear that Maryland Green Travel program is way ahead on the implementation curve.”

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#### **About Maryland Tourism Council**

The Maryland Tourism Council (MTC) is the statewide membership organization representing all segments of the hospitality and tourism industry emphasizing government affairs, business growth, professional development, and alliances with other tourism organizations, the business community, and state and local governments. The mission of MTC is to connect, educate, and represent Maryland’s tourism industry.

#### **About Maryland Department of the Environment**

The mission of the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) is to protect and restore the quality of Maryland’s air, water, and land resources, while fostering smart growth, economic development, healthy and safe communities, and quality environmental education for the benefit of the environment, public health, and future generations.

#### **About the Maryland Office of Tourism**

The Maryland Office of Tourism Development serves as the State’s official travel marketing agency, promoting Maryland attractions, accommodations and services.